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Electronic imaging speeds customer service

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) is using new technology to bring electronic images of a member's documents to staff with a click of the mouse.

What is imaging?

The imaging process electronically stores all documents related to a member's file, allowing staff to quickly view the information on their computers.



Imaging brings member files to staff fingertips.

Because the life cycle of a member's file begins with employment and continues through retirement and on to a beneficiary, our 500,000 member files often contain more than 60 years of paper documents. Imaging allows all that paper to be stored in an easily accessible format.

How does it help members?

Electronic imaging means quick, long-term and secure access to records, as well as better options for recovering the information in the event of a disaster.

For members, this means faster processing of requests and immediate response to questions.

How many images will you have?

Once the project is complete in 2004, DRS will have captured an estimated 20 million images.

Customer service is the top priority at DRS. As caseloads continue to grow, imaging technology helps us ensure we continue to meet your needs.



Retirement Outlook is published by the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems.

The agency administers the following retirement systems for public employees throughout Washington State:

- Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)
- Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)
- School Employees' Retirement System (SERS)
- Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF)
- Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS)
- Judicial Retirement System (JRS)
- Judges' Retirement Fund

DRS also administers the Deferred Compensation and Dependent Care Assistance Programs.

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Committee offers opportunity for input on pension issues

In July of this year the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) replaced the Joint Committee on Pension Policy (JCPP). The new committee has an expanded membership that includes eight legislators, two executive officers of the state, and ten non-legislative representatives of employers, employees and retirees.

The committee studies pension issues between the legislative sessions, and makes recommendations to the legislature during its sessions. Issues for the committee include retirement funding, benefit plan design and other pension topics.

All meetings of the SCPP are open to the public. Retirees are welcome to attend, or to pass their feedback on to committee members. Meeting locations, agendas, minutes and committee member contact information are available on the SCPP Web site at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/scpp/>.



New process provides better service at lower cost

In October 2003, DRS began mailing warrants (checks and remittance advices) in standard white security envelopes bearing the state seal and DRS return address. The envelope's security features prevent personal information from being visible and are easier for customers to open.

This change will save an estimated \$30,000 a year. The savings will come from using standard State of Washington warrant supply, which eliminates the need for special storage and special handling by DRS staff. The new warrants and revised remittance advice format are also easier to read and allow for faster recovery in the event of disaster.

Watch for your 1099-R tax form

With tax season just around the corner, DRS will soon be sending you a 1099-R form – an important document in helping you prepare your income tax documents for filing.

The 1099-R form states the amount of pension or refund income for retirees, members, beneficiaries and former spouses of retirees who received payment(s) from a DRS-administered retirement system during 2003. (1099s do not apply to LEOFF 1 duty disability retirees).

Forms will be mailed to the address on file as of December 31, 2003. If you moved during the past year and have not yet notified DRS, please contact us immediately with your new address. If your form is undeliverable, it will be returned to the agency and forwarded to you upon receipt of your new address.

If you have not received your 1099 by February 9, please call DRS at (360) 664-7000 or 1-800-547-6657 (toll-free outside the Olympia area).

DRS does not determine tax liability or provide tax filing advice. However, the Internal Revenue Service offers tax information through several of its publications. The publications are available at your local IRS office and on the IRS Web site at <http://www.irs.ustreas.gov>. You can also call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

Your charitable gift makes a difference



The Washington State Combined Fund Drive (CFD) is a charitable giving program designed to simplify your gift giving to non-profit agencies. Through the CFD, public agency retirees and state employees can donate to their favorite organizations – charities providing food, shelter, family and children's care, disaster relief, environmental/endangered species protection, and much more. More than 1,900 charities are listed in the 2003 *Charity Guide*.

You can elect to make a contribution by automatic deduction from your monthly pension payment – as little as \$1 a month. Or, you can contribute by personal check. Select a charity from the guide or write in a charity if it is not included. The choice is yours.

For more information, please contact the CFD office in one of the following ways: Call (360) 664-1995 (toll-free 1-888-353-9396), send an E-mail to cfd@dop.wa.gov or visit the Web site at: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/cfd/AboutUs/RetiredPublicEmployeeInfo.htm>.



The Washington State Investment Board manages the investments of your retirement assets in a well-diversified portfolio designed to maximize returns over the long-term. For more information, please visit our Web site at <http://www.sib.wa.gov> and click on Investment Reports at the top of the homepage under the banner. For detailed information on asset allocation and investment performance data, click on the investments button located on the left side of the page.

If you do not have access to the Internet, please call the WSIB at (360) 956-4600 to request printed copies of the information posted on our Web site.

Online or on paper, the WSIB is committed to providing quick and easy access to information that will help all pension fund participants to grow, monitor and protect their public retirement investments.

State retirement plans in solid position

The 2002 *Actuarial Valuation Report*, prepared by the Office of the State Actuary in October 2003, shows the Washington state pension plans to be in a solid funding position overall.

The primary purpose of the valuation, which compares plan assets and liabilities to arrive at a “funded ratio,” is to determine future contribution rates for active members.

Ideally, a plan’s funded ratio would be at 100 percent, meaning that it holds one dollar of assets for every one dollar of liability. Similar to a home mortgage, however, this is achieved over the long-term, with contributions from active members adjusted up or down, primarily depending on the plan’s investment performance. The older a plan is, the closer it should move to fully funding its liabilities.

The Office of the State Actuary posts the report on its Web site, along with a newsletter of timely information. Visit: <http://osa.leg.wa.gov/Publications.htm>.

Retirement Outlook is available to members in alternate formats. For more information contact the editor at (360) 664-7097.

Frequently asked questions

How do I change the address where my retirement benefit is sent?

You have three different options for notifying DRS of an address change:

- Complete a *Name/Address Change* form (available on our Web site at: <http://www.drs.wa.gov/forms/index.htm>) and send it to us; or
- Call us at (360) 664-7000 or toll-free at 1-800-547-6657; or
- Complete the change form included with your remittance advice statement and send it to us.

How do I change my direct deposit?

To change your direct deposit information, complete the *Authorization for Direct Deposit* form found on our Web site at <http://www.drs.wa.gov/forms/index.htm>. Next, take it to your financial institution for the rest of the required information and then send the form to us. Please be sure to call us if you would like the form sent to you instead of accessing it on our Web site.

Your Official Retirement Information Enclosed!

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